



**\$97 MILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDS TO ADDRESS  
PUERTO RICO'S UNEMPLOYMENT LEVEL  
*Monday, March 16, 2009***

WASHINGTON, DC- According to Resident Commissioner Pedro Pierluisi, the U.S. Department of Labor today announced the disbursement of \$97 million for unemployment programs that will provide education and retraining to displaced workers.

The allocation of funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) was announced by the Secretary of the Labor Department, Hilda Solis.

The \$97 million is divided into \$43 million for training and related services to low-income minors between the ages of 14 and 21 years; \$30 million to promote training for individuals who have lost their jobs and are unlikely to return to work in the same industry; \$20 million to provide job training to persons under 18 years, and \$5 million for services to persons seeking new employment.

According to statistics from the Puerto Rico Department of Labor, the Island's unemployment rate is at 13%. The average unemployment rate in the United States is 8%, the highest it has been in 25 years.

"ARRA not only provides funds for retraining workers who lose their jobs, but it has also increased unemployment benefits. We are working hard to alleviate the insecurity of thousands of families who are unable to meet their financial needs," Pierluisi said.

"We will continue to do whatever is necessary to break the destructive cycle of job loss in this country and put Americans back to work," Secretary Solis said.

*<http://pierluisi.house.gov>*